

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY INSTRUCTION
DEFENSE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES



West Point
READY 
READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



Uniquely positioned within the Department of Military Instruction (DMI), the Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS) Program provides that nexus of military development and academic rigor. Within DMI's mission to develop the next generation of army officers with foundational values, character, leadership, and military skills, DSS prepares our future leaders as critical-thinking, strategically minded problem-solvers who can lead in a joint and combined environment during times of rapid technological advancement, and who can communicate with confidence and poise in both written and oral forms. DSS develops cadets' ability to analyze the nuances of security and strategy through an interdisciplinary lens, incorporating its security studies courses with the cadets' academic experience in military and political science, history, anthropology, and sociology to create a well-rounded security-minded professional officer. The Defense and Strategic Studies Program is the fastest growing major and the third most popular non-STEM major at West Point.

ACADEMY SCHOLARS

West Point's Academy Scholars Program (ASP) provides unique personal and professional development opportunities for cadets through an array of domestic internship opportunities and cultural immersion experiences throughout the world. Programs are selected based on their ability to enhance student learning, connect theoretical concepts to the real world, and support Defense Strategic Studies program goals. These ASPs focus on military-to-military relationships, academic advancement, research, and networking with specially designated civilian, government, and military entities. Embedding cadets in military and civilian organizations enables them to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexity of joint, interagency, and multinational partnerships. Domestic internships include a rotation of summer experiences like working with the Coast Guard Center for Research and Development, several weeks working with engineers at

Lockheed Martin, or an internship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A cultural immersions experience could take a cadet on a military staff ride to Japan, offer a summer experience assessing battlefields within the European Command or to the Pacific Command Headquarters for the Strategic Analysis Internship. These unique experiences broaden cadets' perspective and provide them with valuable experiences in preparation for postings within the Continental United States and abroad while serving in uniform as Army officers.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Participation in strategically relevant conferences, workshops, and events in Boston, New York City, and Washington D.C. will expose cadets to the processes related to real-time security challenges. With so many broad and varied opportunities for exploration taking place within hours of West Point, cadets have opportunities to learn about security concerns of adopting leading commercial technology for military systems, meet veterans sharing experiences and lessons learned from combat situations, study contemporary and urban security threats, examine the tools and subtleties of diplomacy, and consider the application and intersection of strategy, security, and policy at the levels of Congress, the National Security Council, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and private sector defense companies. This formalized collaboration will help build cadet and DSS networks and help showcase the DSS program within the governmental, military, and civilian security spheres.

While DSS majors have the opportunity to visit the American Veteran's Conference in Washington D.C. or the National Center for Urban Operations in New York City, a variety of significant conferences and events occur at West Point throughout the year. The DSS program hosts many guest speakers and lecturers at the Academy to augment and enrich cadets' academic development within the current course curriculum. Subject matter experts provide cadets with distinct approaches to address current day strategy and policy issues. Projects Day, which takes place a few

short weeks before graduation every year, allows the First Class cadets to present their thesis and capstone projects to subject matter experts, staff and faculty, and Academy guests. These theses and capstone projects are an integral part of a cadet's course requirements. Awards and commendations presented to graduating cadets are given during the DSS Projects Day Award reception, a recognition celebration event for the First Class cadets, staff and faculty, and invited guests.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The Department of Military Instruction's Defense and Strategic Studies Program operates beyond the classroom space, taking cadets to field environments that are more technologically integrated collaborative spaces and more conducive to fostering inter-faculty dialogue and cadet development. The outdoor classroom, similar to a Ranger School planning bay, provides a weather-proof workspace for instructors to conduct formal classes in conjunction with hands-on practices and rehearsals of small unit tactics during a class period. This combination of hands-on training directly following a formal class presentation better solidifies tactical understanding for cadets, allowing them to apply skills studied and experienced to their follow-on summer training and leadership details.

Enhancing outdoor training are Unit4 Rifles, realistic replicas of the M4A1 rifle. These replica rifles are used to support the user's ability to improve their techniques and tactics with heightened safety and effectiveness. Funding for the purchase of this advanced training system is needed to revolutionize force-on-force training throughout the academic year and Cadet Summer Training. Additionally, it would significantly enhance accessibility for cadets to the training systems by eliminating the need for storage of ammunition in conventional arms rooms or ammunition supply points. The addition of Unit4 Rifles to the DMI



and DSS programs seamlessly aligns with the imperative to conduct rigorous training throughout the academic year and into the cadet summer training cycle.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Acknowledging the importance of faculty development, DSS continues to provide broadening and enrichment opportunities for its faculty. Opportunities such as the USARPAC Chinese Way of War (CWOW) course offer faculty wargaming experience within a joint forces academic setting. Following these experiences, instructors return to the Academy bringing critical understanding and perspective about the United States' current near-peer adversary both into the classroom and out into the force to help shape future military strategy. Current and relevant courses in the strategic operational space, like the Information Warfare course at the Naval Postgraduate School, ensures that the DSS program begins the shift to handling the new and complex character of warfare in the emerging information domains. The ability to hire a Strategic Studies Fellow to support faculty development is critically important to supporting academic and military instructors who have the professional knowledge and experience in the defense and strategic studies arena.

The Defense and Strategic Studies Program offers a unique opportunity for cadets to fuse their academic concentration with their experiential military training, resulting in a holistic development of future leaders of our Army. This combination of classroom and real-world exposure provides powerful learning opportunities. The DSS Program meets today's ever-changing realities and makes certain that West Point maintains its competitive edge, attracting the best and brightest cadets to the Academy for an unparalleled education.





Photo: Lee Ross '73

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Campaign Goal \$4.7 million

- Strategic Studies Fellow..... \$540,000 / 3-year funding
- Guest Lecture Series..... \$990,000 endowment/ \$39,500 annual
- Cadet Conferences, Workshops, & Events\$1.4 million endowment/ \$56,000 annual
- Academy Scholars Program..... \$1 million endowment / \$40,000annual
- Domestic Internships
 - 1 Cadet - \$5,000 annual
- Cultural Immersion Program
 - 1 Cadet - \$8,000 annual
- Class Staff Rides..... \$135,000 annual / 4 staff rides per year
 - 1 Staff Ride - \$34,000
- Faculty Research & Development\$85,000 annual
- Outdoor Classroom
 - Planning Bay\$265,000 one -time expense
 - Unit4 Rifles\$285,000 one-time expense

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



Bennett Smoot | West Point Association of Graduates
 698 Mills Road, West Point, NY 10996
 Phone 845.446.1602
WestPointAOG.org

as of May 24, 2024